HIV-Positive Vietnamese Students Shunned From School

August 24, 2009

After two years of lobbying by the Ho Chi Minh City orphanage, the An Nhon Dong Elementary School in Vietnam granted permission for 15 HIV-positive children to attend classes on August 17. However, *Time* reports, parents shunned the students and refused to let their HIV-negative children interact with them.

While discrimination against HIV-positive people is nothing new in Vietnam, the country has some of the most comprehensive HIV/AIDS antidiscrimination laws in the world, said Jesper Morch, the UNICEF representative in Vietnam.

According to Vietnamese law, children cannot be barred from school because they or any of their family members have HIV/AIDS. However, it remains a challenge to fight stigma around the virus because it's associated with so-called "social evils." "You can have wonderful policies and wonderful legislation," said Morch, but without effective HIV awareness efforts, "you'll have trouble enforcing them."

For now, the children will return to the Mai Hoa Center—a home for AIDS orphans—to continue their schooling. An Nhon Dong Elementary promised to provide them with textbooks and teachers to assist them in their education.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/vietnam-students-hiv-stigma-17142-6558